

CHANGE
OUT!!

TOKITA!



*THE ENTRANCE AND EXIT FOR PLAYERS SUBBING IN AND OUT
BY THE WAY, THIS DOESN'T REQUIRE THE REFEREE'S PERMISSION.



Victory Shot!



IT'S
SUMMEE-
EEEEER!!!

YAMAGAKI'S
TRUE ACE HAS
ENTERED!!

HOAAAA!
SORRY I KEPT
YOU WAITING,
GUHYS!!!

Ring24 :
Victory Shot!





THAT
SENSEI
GAVE
ME?

INSTRUCTIONS...



That's
it!

he told
me to stop
that bald
once and
for all...!



I'M
BEGINN'
YOU PLEASE
DON'T DO
ANYTHING
RECKLESS...

**YOU
LIAR!!**

I
think.

He said
to make a
comeback
with a
long-
distance
shot...

BEHOLD,
HMM? HE
TELL YOU!!



MU?

YOU DON'T
HAVE TO DO
ANYTHING
ELSE, OKAY?

OKAY. LISTEN
CLOSE, SUMMER...
YOU'RE GONNA
FOLLOW SENSEI'S
INSTRUCTIONS, AND
THAT'S IT!



ANDY'S RING!

6PK LAM

6PK RIGHT





SPK. DAN







WHAT AN
INCRED-
IBLE
PASS!!!

UWAA
AAAH



SAORI !!

UWAA
AAAH



THANK
A LOT!!

SPX BRIGHT





*IF THE OFFENSE PERFORMS A FOUL
WITHIN THE GOAL AREA, THEN THE
OFFENSE IS GIVEN ONE FREE-THROW.

FORGET ABOUT
EVERYBODY ELSE!
AND YOU DON'T
NEED TO BE PART
OF THE OFFENSE,
EITHER!!

ALL YOU
SHOULD BE
THINKING ABOUT
IS HOW TO STOP
THAT BALDY!!

JUST STICK
TO THAT GUY
LIKE GLUE!!
GOOOT
IIIIIT?

DID YOU
FORGET
WHAT
SENSEI
TOLD
YOU?!

I DON'T
WANA
HEAR THAT
GUY FROM
YOU!!

BUT IF I
HADN'T FOLLOED
LIM THEY
DEFINITELY
WOULD'VE
GOTTEN A
POINT...

HMP

LISTEN
UP!

ハッ
SPX 318

AMU...

THAT
IDIOT!

WE'LL
TAKE THAT
POINT RIGHT
BACK!!

SPX 318
00/

Their
momentum is
decreasing!!

APPI
scored
88-4th
point!

He got
the Free-
throwssssss!!

02 1 04











THERE'S NO
WAY HE
CAN CATCH
UP TO
IKKU!!

I KNEW IT,
IT'S NO
GOOD
!!



BAST-
ARD...



SPK. YAAAAH

SPK. DASH

THE SPEED
OF HIS SLIDING
IKKU SURE
IS LIVING
UP TO HIS
REPUTATION
!!!

BAM!
HE
SCORERD
5TH POINT!!

NOBODY
CAN STOP
THEM
NOW!!





SPY KIRIN





AND....

FOR
REAL?



YOU STAYED
POSITIVE
AND YOUR
MOVEMENT
WAS SHARP,
TOO,
MANASATA-
KUN...

THIS WAS
YOUR FIRST
MATCH, BUT
YOU WEREN'T
NERVOUS OR
STIFF.....



WTF?

HOW-
EVER?



SR.....
I GUESS YOU
REALLY WERE
WATCHING ME
THEN!

YES.....
SOME ERRORS IN
JUDGMENT ARE
TO BE EXPECTED
FOR SOMEONE
WITHOUT ANY
REAL GAME
EXPERIENCE...

HOWEVER



WE'RE
GONNA
LOSE.

AS FAR AT
THE GAME
GOES, AS
THINGS
CURRENTLY
STAND



AND IT'S
IKKI
AGAIN!!

SCOOORE!
THAT'S
THE 8TH
POINT!!!

EPK 1041



SUPER-
GOOBY!

YOU DON'T
LIKE LOSING,
RIGHT,
HANAGATA-
KUN?



6 to 2
!!

LOOKS
LIKE THE
DIFFERENCE
IN THE TEAMS'
ABILITY IS
STARTING TO
BECOME
APPARENT!!

THAT
GUY
...

EPK 1050 (CHALD)

EPK 1050



VERY
GOOD.



WE'RE
COUNTING
ON YOU,
HANAGATA-
KUN.

OKAY,
LISTEN
CLOSELY TO WHAT
SENSEI
HAS TO SAY.



To somebody
as 'addicted
to winning' as
Hanagata
Natsu...

That's
a silly
question!

THE
YAMAGAKI
1ST YEAR
AGE SAKI
SCORED

THE
BACK-AND-
FORTH OF
SCORING
BETWEEN
THE TEAMS
CONTINUED...

SCORED A
BONUS-SHOT
THAT WOULD
TURN OUT TO
BE VERY
PAINFUL FOR
YAMAGAKI...

AND
EVEN DATE,
WHO WAS
DISTRACTED
FROM THE
MATCH
BECAUSE OF
HIS ATTENTION
ON NORIMI...

IKKI WAS
ABLE TO
SCORE A
CRIPPLING
9TH
POINT.

JUST
AS THE
1ST
HALF
WAS
ENDING

WITHOUT
HESITATION,
THEY WERE
ABLE TO
BILLY WITH
THEIR
INDIVIDUAL
SKILLS, BUT

AND
AFTER
THAT—

AND
HERE
.....







YOU
ALL CAN
RELAX!
I GOT THIS

!!
~~~~~

GUYS!



Wh-Whaaa?!!  
Don't pin all  
this on me,  
you placed  
a crap!

IT'S  
PRACTICALLY  
BECAUSE OF  
YOU THAT THE  
GAP IN SCORES  
IS SO BIG!!

Y...  
YOU  
IDIOT  
!!

SCORER,  
THIS GUY'S  
JUST GONNA  
MAKE THE  
GAME  
MISTAKES  
AGAIN!

WAT



LOSING  
MEANS  
GIVING  
UP.....

LACED-  
STAND

NO MATTER  
HOW BIG AND  
COMPLICATED  
A MESS YOU'RE  
IN, THERE'S  
ALWAYS AN  
EXIT...

AS LONG AS YOU  
DON'T GIVE UP, YOU  
CAN BE CERTAIN  
YOU'LL EVENTUALLY  
MAKE IT TO THE  
GOAL.....

HANAGATA-KUN  
HAS THAT  
TENACITY NOT  
TO GIVE UP.



I HOPE ALL  
OF YOU WOULD  
THINK OF THE  
"FEAR" OF  
MAKING  
MISTAKES IS  
THE WORST  
MISTAKE.

WHAT'S  
IMPORTANT  
IS NOT TO  
GIVE UP.

8



I WANT  
EVERYONE TO  
CONCENTRATE  
HARD ON  
OFFENSE AND  
ATTACK...!

ANYHOW, THE  
THEME FOR THE  
2ND HALF WILL  
BE SCORING  
POINTS...!!



DON'T  
COUNT ON  
GLIMMER!!

GO!!

ALL WE CAN  
DO NOW  
IS TRUST  
SENSEI AND  
FIGHT!!

GOOKEY!  
LET'S  
GOOO!!

GO

It's  
time!



Let's make  
the crowd even  
bigger in the  
2nd half!!

Don't go  
easy on  
'em!!

GOO!! GO DEEL  
THE FINISHING  
BLOW, ROYAL!!

GOT  
IT!!

The 2nd  
half is  
starting!!



I KNOW  
HOW TO CONVINCE  
HIM.....

HIS DAD  
WAS A  
SELPHISH  
GUY, TOO...



FIRST OF ALL,  
I DON'T EVEN  
KNOW IF HE  
WAS ACTUALLY  
LISTENING  
TO YOU

IS... IS HE  
GONNA BE  
OKAY...?  
THAT  
BLUNDER  
KID...?

HE'LL  
BE  
FINE



HUNT



Throw-  
off!!!

SPX PITCH

Yama-  
gaku's  
Ring!!



ARE THEY  
ALL GOING  
FOR AN  
ATTACK  
NOW?!

SPX HAH

OOOOO!!  
YAMA-  
GAKU!!



BUT I'M  
ACTUALLY  
THINKING  
THAT  
THAT'S  
THEIR  
STRATEGY...

WELL,  
THAT'S  
ONLY  
NATURAL  
IF YOU  
CONSIDER  
THE  
POINT  
DIFFERENCE



GET  
FIRED  
UP,  
EVERY-  
BODYyyy!!

URRM!  
LET'S  
GOOO!!

OW!!  
LET'S  
MAKE  
A  
COME-  
BACK!!



FOR US TO  
COUNTER-  
ATTACK!

BECAUSE  
IT'LL BE  
EASIER

SPX MARK OFFER







HM...?



SUMME-  
BEER!!

!!



HEH.

YOU  
AIN'T  
GETTING  
BY ME  
...!



SASTARD



YOU CAN'T  
LET "HIM"  
RUN!

FIRST.



IS  
PREVENTING  
YOUR  
OPPONENT  
FROM  
GETTING  
PAST YOU!

THE MOST  
IMPORTANT  
PART OF  
DEFENSE



DANNY



THERE'S NO  
NEED TO ACTUALLY  
TAKE THE HING  
FROM HIM.

YOU MEAN  
THAT BOLD  
BEST MOP

JUST  
FOCUS ON  
STOPPING HIS  
MOVEMENT



AH!



TOO!!



!!

CRASH!!

SFC: BACH



They scored!

They beat Anri as their own game!

WHAHAHA! THIS TIME YAMAGAKI COUNTERED!!



HE INTERCEPTED IT!!



WHAT WE NEED TO PREVENT FIRST AND FOREMOST

O... O...

IS THE ONE-MAN QUICK ATTACK WHERE THEY HAVE A CLEAR CHANCE TO SCORE



SFC: BACH

ON!

ALL RIGHT! NICE ONE!!



GOOD, NOW GO FOR A COUNTER !!



ANDR'S  
SPECIALTY QUICK  
ATTACK WON'T  
BE QUITE SO  
FEARSOME.

IF THE REST  
OF THE TEAM CAN  
MAKE IT IN THE TIME  
HANAGATA-KUN HAS  
STOPPED HIM IN  
PLACE...

SFX: DON



DON'T  
LOOK  
DOWN  
ON ME,  
DARWIN!!

HAS HE  
TOTALLY  
SEALED IKKI  
OFF?!!



IT'S  
MAN TO  
MAAAAN!!



WILL YOU  
REALLY BE ABLE  
TO STOP OUR  
AGE AS EASILY  
AS YOU  
PLANNED?

BUT...

YOU'VE  
TOUCHED ONE  
OF OUR VITAL  
POINTS QUITE  
ACCURATELY...

YOU REALLY  
REVISED YOUR  
STRATEGY FROM  
THE 1ST HALF  
FAST. I SHOULD  
EXPECT NOTHING  
LESS, FUJI-CHAN.

AND MOVE  
IN-STEP  
WITH HIM.

BUT  
YOU CAN'T  
SETTLE  
DOWN

YOU NEED  
TO BE NIMBLE  
IN BLOCKING  
THEIR  
COURSE

IF THE  
OPPONENT  
TRIES TO  
FORCE THEIR  
PWAY  
THROUGH

YOU  
JUST WANT  
TO FOCUS ON  
KEEPING HIM  
FROM  
GETTING  
PAST YOU

DO YOU  
SERIOUSLY  
THINK YOU  
CAN KEEP  
UP WITH MY  
SPEED?!

STUPID  
BASTARD!

SPR. 20th

SPR. 19th

SPR. 20th

BLOCK  
THE  
COURSE  
!!

VOH!





BY SUMMER  
STOPPING  
IKKI, THE  
FLY'S  
NATURALLY  
GONE OUR  
WAY...!

IT'S  
SUMMER....



SORRY,  
OR  
RATHER

KINEA....  
FEELS LIKE  
YAMAGUCHI  
HAS THE  
MOMENTUM  
NOW, DOESN'T  
IT?

ANRI'S  
ADVANTAGE  
SOME DOWN  
A LITTLE

THE POINT  
DIFFERENCE HE  
GONNA REALLY  
LAY HEAVY ON US  
WITH THE LITTLE  
TIME WE'VE GOT  
LEFT.....!

ACTUALLY,  
IF WE DON'T  
CATCH UP  
NOW...

NOW'S OUR  
CHANCE TO  
CATCH UP...!



HMP

GENGE!  
HOW ON  
EARTH DID  
YOU  
PERSUADE  
HIM...?

UNBELIEVABLE...  
HE'D USUALLY  
BE GONG FOR  
ALL KINDS OF  
WEEP SHOTS AT  
THIS POINT.....

EVEN  
THOUGH  
SUMMER'S  
USUALLY SO  
SLOPPY, HE'S  
PUTTING UP  
SOME SOLID  
DEFENSE....



I TOLD HIM  
THAT IF HE  
WANTED TO WIN,  
THAT'S WHAT HE  
HAD TO DO.....  
MANGATA-KUN  
REALLY HATES  
LOSING, YOU  
SEE.....

IN ORDER  
TO ACHIEVE  
VICTORY, YOU  
HAVE TO BOTH  
CHANGE YOUR  
PLAYS AND  
HOW YOU  
THINK ABOUT  
THEM...



SUMMER,  
THE KING OF  
SELFISHNESS

IS THAT  
REALLY  
ALL...?



C'MOOOON!  
COME GET US,  
ANRI!!

I'LL STOP  
EVERY LAST  
ONE 'A  
YOU!!







HMMMM?  
WHAT'S  
WRONG,  
AKA?!

TAKE  
IT!

AH  
AAA



AHT  
AH  
...!!



I GUESS  
PLAYING 2  
MATCHES IN A  
ROW IS REALLY  
TAKING IT'S  
TOLLLLLL!!

KU

AAAAAH!  
AKA  
HURT HIS  
LEGGGG!!



HE  
SOUNDS  
LIKE  
HE'S IN  
TROUBLE!



AND NOT JUST  
THAT, OUR  
OPPONENT  
IS ANRI...

MAN.....  
SAORI'S  
PLAYED IN BOTH  
GAMES,  
TOO...



ISU!

GET  
READY,  
TORIKAI!



GHT.....  
AT THIS POINT  
OUR LACK OF  
BENCH  
STRENGTH  
IS REALLY  
HURTING  
US...!!

EVERYONE'S  
PROBABLY  
REACHING  
THEIR PEAK  
OF FATIGUE





WHAAAAAAAAAAH?!



RIGHT  
HERE!!!

WE'VE  
STILL GOT  
ONE GUY  
FIGHTING  
WITH  
ENERGY!!



HE  
TOOK  
HINT!!!

WHAAAAA!!  
IT'S GUN-  
MEEEEEET!!



WITH ALL  
THAT ENERGY,  
HE GOT A  
7TH POINT!!

UNAAAA!  
IT'S  
SACRIFICII!!

YAMAGUCHI UNDE-  
7-10

THEY'VE  
GUNK THEIR  
TEETH IN!!  
DON'T  
GIVE UP,  
YAMAGUCHI!!

OK, GUN



YOU  
SHOULD  
JUST MAKE IT  
EASY ON  
YOURSELVES  
AND STOP  
DEATH!!



OH, IT'S  
GAMMA-  
RAY

OOOOO!!  
SUNNIE'S  
REACTING!!

NICE  
GONNA  
SUNNIE-  
GEMMET!!



THE BOOK YOU REPPED OFF FROM THAT STORE BACK THEN...

WOW!

I JUST REMINDED...



VWAH!

YOU SHOULD HAVE DIED, MONKEY!



IT WAS A PORNO MAG, WASN'T IT?



Wa...  
Whaaaat  
...?

UWAAA!  
SUMMER  
TOOK IT  
AGAIN!!



THEREERE,  
GOT IT!



IT'LL BE  
FINE,  
SUPER-  
VILLAIN.

STOP  
HIM!!

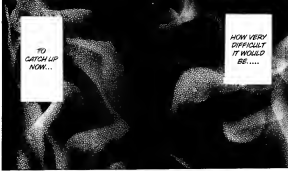
WHAT THE  
HELL'S HE  
DOING...!!



THERE'S NO  
TIME LEFT...  
WE'VE WON  
THIS.

IT LOOKED A  
LITTLE SCARY  
THERE FOR A  
MINUTE, BUT...





TO  
CATCH UP  
NOW...

HOW VERY  
DIFFICULT  
IT WOULD  
BE.....



THERE'S  
3 OR 50  
MINUTES  
LEFT....

AND WE'RE  
3 OR MORE  
POINTS  
BEHIND...

IF



EXCEPT  
FOR  
ONE OF  
THEM



14 SHOT FROM YOUR OWN GOAL AREA





SPE. 84...





THIS  
IS..

JUST A  
BEGIN-  
NING—





OF THE MANY  
THAT ONE  
BEGINNER  
WOULD LEAVE  
BEHIND.....



AND THE  
BEGINNING  
OF JUST  
ONE.....







# Shimabu's Story

(Until I made Ring 010)

Well, I said I was gonna go look for a hoop, but they didn't exist (hehe), so I had to just look for a ring close to the ones used in RING. The first thing that came to mind for me was a "hula hoop". The first thing I had in mind when I was first thinking about RING was a hula hoop, so I figured I'd start by testing it out with a hula hoop... So I went to a large sports store and looked for a hula hoop. I never expected to be buying a hula hoop at this age... At that time, I was still writing Names in Okinawa, but I came across a nearby large (really, it was huge) sports shop. So I went there and found one pretty easily, a hula hoop. But I thought at the time, this was really totally different from what I imagined! How was it different...? Well first, it felt too slender when I gripped it and the ring itself was huge! And when I threw it on the ground, it didn't bounce as high as I expected it to... Mmm, this is frustrating... I'd had memories of hula hoops springing high into the air when I threw them on the ground... And it was plastic, so it felt like if you threw it too hard it would break. I tested it out in the shop before I bought it, and I had been thinking it wouldn't look too good if I broke it before I even bought it... (Hehe). So it turned out there was too big gap in what a real hula hoop was and what I'd imagined... That was unavoidable.

Okay, so with the hula hoop being off from what I'd imagined, what should I try next... Thinking about it, the next thing that came to mind was bicycle tube. Those are made of rubber so they should bounce, and their thickness and texture should be just about right, I thought. So I looked around that same sports shop and there, I found it, a tube. But there were all tubes for adult bicycles which were too big, also way off from how I'd imagined them. But when I tried grasping the tires full of air for stuff like mountain bikes, they felt like they matched the rings from the RING I had in my head perfectly! The thickness was perfect, too. There was just a problem of size, and of course it was a bicycle tire, so they had a thing sticking out to put air into the tube. That thing was really gonna get in the way, and if it were just the tube, that would be facing outward... So at that time I bought a tire cover sorta thing to cover the outside of the tube. Or not so much a cover as an actual tire. The type that have no tube inside.

# Shimabu's Story

(Until I made Ring (12))

Those are also technically rubber, but it was the outside of a tire so it had the gouged-out inside shape (Like a handle cover in a car). So of course it didn't bounce, even if you threw it hard on the ground, it would just go limp so it was totally different from the image in my head. So basically in a "this'll be fine for now" way I bought it.

Okay, okay, time to start a game of RING (Hehe!! Yes! With that tire!! Though I actually didn't have any rules decided yet. So I ended up just tossing the ball, or rather the ring, back and forth with my brother (Like, a pass facing each other). We did it in a vacant lot nearby the house we grew up in, but if anybody had seen us there, they were probably wondering what the hell these guys were doing (Hehe). Because at first glance it looks like we're throwing a frisbee around, but upon closer inspection, it's "These guys are throwing a tire back and forth!!" (Hehe). So what we did was we gradually got further and further away from each other and we passed it back and forth at a maximum of 40-50 meters and me and my little brother were able to pass it directly to one another at that range. But when we caught it, it actually kinda hurt. I guess that was because of the rotation. If the sport of Ring really existed, if the pro-level players threw this Ring, the speed of the rotation would be nothing like this, right...? I thought. It was at that point that I decided to give the players gloves. I felt like RING was finally starting to take form, and I remember getting pretty excited then... Kyahaha (Hehe).

The next thing I tried to do was Shooting. Of course I've said this hundreds of times (No you didn't!), that a RING goal post doesn't exist in this world, so I just used an iron pipe that was sitting around in the vacant lot that had been used in a construction site and used it like a goal. That was where I tried throwing it using the sort of tricks you use in a ring-toss. But these didn't really go in (Hehe). Even if I really tried, I still couldn't get a ringee Man, that's hard!! If I got close enough I could get it in, but when I got just a bit further away, around 5-6 meters, it really got pretty difficult! But! BUT YOU SEE! Sorry, I got kinda heated here., (hehe) but please listen!

# Shimabu's Story

(Until I made Ring (13))

The joy I felt at the moment I did get it in seriously felt great!! I was pretty casual about that joy, but it was pretty intense (Hehe!! It was incomparable to the feeling for getting a 3-pointer in basketball!! If I had to compare it to something it would be like getting a goal in soccer or at least close to it in terms of tension. That's how happy I was from that!! I mean, it was just my little brother and I there with nobody else around, just throwing a tire so it went around a pipe, and I felt that excited... In a way, it was a real shock... Kinda like I'd found some sorta jewel in a place nobody else knew about (That's an exaggeration for ya!!) Hehe. But really, that's what I thought at the time. Aah... I want to convey RING with this... I thought. The characters and the story and the subject matter would all be fictional, but that one thing I actually felt was real. Just the idea of throwing a hoop onto a pole really made electricity flow in my body. Like around 2 volts worth... (Geez, that's not much!!) Hehe. It's kinda hard to communicate, but... or rather it's impossible, but just having been able to physically experience that made me feel like there would be meaning in drawing RING, I thought, and somehow or other my courage increased 100 fold...

And so, getting wound up over that, I decided that the next thing I'd try would be playing around with the Ring, or rather the hoop (tire), and what sort of plays I could do with it... basically. But this was kinda like a street-performance juggling trick, so I couldn't really do any plays that were all that impressive without practicing... That was another thing I felt out there... However on the other hand, if I had the premise of people who'd been playing RING for a long time ever since they were kids, then a whole lot of plays would be possible, wouldn't there? It felt like there were quite a lot of possibilities. But again, for that, all I could do was imagine...

The thing that frustrated me the most... I guess would be dribbling. When I was thinking about the rules, this was honestly the thing that I was worried over the most. What do I do about dribbling... I thought about it in a whole bunch of different ways. Should I restrict it to the "number of steps", like in basketball, while carrying the Ring...? Or should I do it like in handball where the "time" you can carry the ring is restricted... This caused me a great deal of frustration. And when actually carrying the ring, (tire) there was a lot of trial and error in trying to move with it...

# Shimabu's Story

(Until I made Ring (14))

Dribbling is decisively one of the more major means of approaching an opponent's territory, so it has to carry a considerable risk with it, I'd say. All sports have a risk like that as part of the rules, after all... But one thing I had made up my mind about was "Simple is best!", so I wanted to make the rules as simple and easy to understand as possible. So I wanted to leave out complicated stuff like time and number of steps if at all possible. I was creating something that had no real "right answer" to it, so I decided I'd just go with simple! Yeah! I could attach anything else I need later on, anyhow... You might ask why it is I thought that way... You see when I was making "Ring" I read lots of different sports' rule books. And what I learned from them was: the rules of pretty much every sport change little by little every year. Even sports that've been around for over 100 years are still having revisions to the rules. In other words, rules themselves are things that change with the era, so it's essentially impossible to make perfect ones right from the outset. With that in mind, there obviously was no way some average guy like me could make perfect rules. You could call this a form of dodging responsibility... (hehe). But thinking that made things a whole lot easier, and so I divided the work. So I'd start with just trying to come up with the bare-basic rules. ...By the way, I read a whole bunch of rule books, and rugby and basketball seriously have too many fouls (hehe)! In my mind, soccer has the ideal rules! Among all these sports, soccer's rule book is extremely thin and there are few actual violations you can perform. Also, what I think is really amazing about soccer is that even if you don't have a ball, just something round, anyone can play it anywhere. In other words, kids can play it no matter how poor their country is. I don't think sports that cost money to play are necessarily bad, not at all, but people all over the world can enjoy the game the same way. I think that point is what makes soccer such a great sport. And soccer is undoubtedly the king of sports (Though I'd really like it if Ring became at least a foot-soldier of sports... hehe!).

# Shimabushi Story

(Until I made Ring 053)

Okay, about the rules, I decided on simple. So with dribbling I ended up with no restrictions on it. Run with it in your hand (hehe) You can run all you want! is what I went with... To be honest, I only decided this after Ring was already serialized (hey, hey...). So I did stress over that quite a bit. In place of it, I decided to implement the 'Over-Keep' rule which is a lot like something they have in rugby (See 'RING' volume 2). There are a lot of things that get called violations, aren't there? Frequently, they're things to "limit dangerous play" and limit "stalling for time". So from there, I figured that in sports where scores you earn determine the match, there's really no need to "stall for time", right...? Like in volleyball or tennis or badminton or table tennis, there's really no meaning in "stalling for time", pretty much... So what I stressed over next was since Ring is a field sport, so if I made it something like whoever gets to 10 points first wins, then nobody would be thinking about time, right (hehe)? So it's possible the game could keep going for over 3 hours or even end in 15 minutes... When I considered that, I decided it would feel way more natural to make RING a game that ended when time ran out. I had come to a pretty clear answer there. So then you had the problem of what to do if a winning team did things to delay the game in order to run away with it... Right, so there I referenced the rules of soccer, but in soccer you have the concept of 'ungentlemanly conduct', in other words plays that the referee judged as unsportsmanlike were then given that label and considered a violation. In other words, there are some strictly established rules, but beyond that there were things the referee could judge depending on the individual situation. It's quite a compromise, or rather a convenient rule, huh? At that point I say "That rule rocks!" (hehe). In ring I decided on some rough rules, but everything beyond that I decided would be up to the referee (hehe) Mm, I've gotta say I took the easy way out... Hmph! I thought. (What the hell do you mean Hmph?!)

# Shimabu's Story

(Until I made Ring (16))

There was still a lot to come up with, but this next one was straight and to the point! What do I do with the uniforms?! Yeah... For this, it was really strange, as there were times when I said "Whoa--If in every sport, you could tell which sport it was just by looking at the uniforms. This is an offhand remark, don't you think that's incredible? In judo, kendo, American football, and ice hockey, just by how they look, well I guess those are pretty obvious, but even in sports like soccer and rugby and of course baseball and basketball, everyone can tell what sport the players are in without even seeing them play. Ideally I'd like that kind of simplicity to be in Ring, too, but this was another thing that was surprisingly difficult... Every sport's uniform, much as you'd expect, was an outfit made to suit the sport they were going to be played in. So then we have RING, a sport played outside with some degree of physical exertion. So then the shoes would have to be spiked. I figured "Okay, I guess" on that one, but the important part is the design of the uniforms. So of course, I was gonna have to reference other outdoor sports like soccer or rugby. So then how do I go about differentiating them... The first thing I thought of was since RING was something I had thought up, and I'm Japanese, the sport of Ring in the manga would be a sport with Japanese origins... So then maybe I could give it Japanese conventions like something familiar like a Sash around everyone...? Yeah, like around the waist. I mean karate and judo are both sports with a sash of some sort, and I wouldn't be overlapping with them too much, I thought. Also, since it kinda looked cool visually, or maybe it's just me that thinks they're cool, I thought about putting something high-neck at the throat... I thought about the undershirts that they have in baseball, like Ichirou or somebody wearing those high-neck undershirts was kinda cool. In Ring I would put pads in there and in the unlikely event that the ring went around your neck, pads would have to protect your throat, so it would serve that purpose, too (Though that was a reason I came up with later on...) I figured that would be the limit as far as uniform design went. I mean I'm not all that good at that sorta thing. If it were up to me I would be pretty "whatever" when it came to the clothes, so I figured that was pretty okay... (Yeah, that should be good.) I kinda followed myself up there!

# Shimabu's Story

(Until I made Ring (17))

Gumu----, I still have a I haven't finished with my 'Until I Made Ring' (What?! You do?!) and there's tons of things I haven't written enough about, but I don't have enough pages left... (Hey!). By the way, about the hoop used in Ring, after that I tested it out on a bicycle tube and just as I expected, it didn't really work. Believe it or not, the closest thing I could find was (I touched a bit on this before) was a car's steering wheel cover!! The feeling of grasping it, the weight, and the texture were all perfect!! Also it bounced so it made a perfect ring!! There's a lot of other stuff I'd like to talk about, so until an opportunity arises when I get another chance... that's all.

Lastly, I didn't write this manga called 'RING' because I wanted to show people the sport of Ring... Ring is simply the theme. The star of the show is without question the characters!! What I wanted to show everyone was Summer Toki, Saori and the rest!! The stars of any manga are always the characters. If I'm able to draw their incredible stories of what comes after this, I'd really like to!! To all the staff that went through great pains since this manga called 'RING' was announced, to all my editors that I bothered by always handing in things right at the deadline, to all my assistants that helped out without complaining even in the difficult times, to my family that's always supported me, and most of all all the readers that've supported me, you have my deepest gratitude. This manga is for all the people I hold dear, my readers, and all of my loved ones up in heaven. See ya later~!

2005.5.9 SHIMABU

■ジャンプ・コミックス デラックス

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